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Memorial Sonnets,

&c.

BY

Mary Cowden-Clarke.

LONDON:
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1888.

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SB1120

Major Malcolm Gray

with cordial regards
and all good wishes

from

Mary Cowden-Clarke

Villa Novello:
Genoa.
Christmas 1893.

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4-16-82

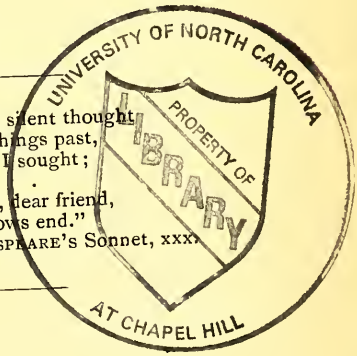
MEMORIAL SONNETS

&c.

BY

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE

AUTHOR OF "THE COMPLETE CONCORDANCE TO SHAKESPEARE,"
"THE GIRLHOOD OF SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES," "THE IRON COUSIN,"
"HONEY FROM THE WEED," "VERSE-WAIFS," "A SCORE OF
SONNETS TO ONE OBJECT," ETC., ETC.



"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought;
. . . . . .
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd, and sorrows end."

SHAKESPEARE'S Sonnet, xxx.

LONDON

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1888.

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JOSEPH EZEKIEL POGUE
ENDOWMENT FUND

PREFACE.

To live in Memories of the Past when gone
Are all its brightest joys, to summon them
Before the now bereft and saddened sight
That looks on present void, is surely not
Unwise. As one who sits and watches,—when
The sun hath set, and sees th' expanse of sky
Reflected glory show, recalling how
The brilliancy and beauty now withdrawn
Have left a milder, soberer, yet most bland
And tender light, a twilight lucid with
Departed splendour,—muses not without
A grateful thought on past effulgence lent
That softens coming darkness, auguring
The morrow's dawn and noon in humble trust
To live and them behold: So I indulge
Remembrance of past happy hours and wait
Devoutly for the hoped Eternal Day.

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CONTENTS.

MEMORIAL SONNETS.

	PAGE
CARLSRUHE, I., II., III., IV.	9
"ONE GRIEF SUPREME"	13
"MAY'T BE, THY NOW PERFECTED SIGHT"	14
KEATS AND CHARLES COWDEN-CLARKE, I., II.	15
STAR EYES, I., II.	17
"AY, JUST AS EVER DO I LOVE THEE"	19
"IN DREAM LAST NIGHT"	20
"FULL SEVEN YEARS HAVE PASSED"	21
"HERE ON THIS TERRACE"	22
"A BLISSFUL DREAM"	23
MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY, I., II., III., IV.	24
"METHINKS THY SPIRIT SEES ME"	28
"DOST HEAR ME WHISPER STILL"	29
"IN CHERISHING THY MEMORY"	30
"WHEN I REPEAT THY"	31
"I BASKED IN SUNSHINE OF APPROVAL"	32
"I THUS AGAIN BEGIN THE"	33
"THE THOUGHT OF THEE IS HUSBAND"	34
ON IMAGINATION, I., II., III., IV.	35
"A HAPPINESS THROUGH LIFE"	39
"SWEET FOOD FOR THOUGHT"	40
"A TENDER MELANCHOLY"	41
"AH, WHEN AGAIN I REACH"	42
"I KEEP OUR WEDDING-DAY"	43
"THIS, OUR BETROTHAL-DAY"	44
REVEALMENT, I., II.	45

PAGE
"In dream't has been permitted" 47
"'Tis not so much I mourn" 48
"No longer mourning" 49
"To me a fresh New Year" 50
"This day, nine years ago" 51
On re-seeing my Charles's Shakespeare-Ring . . 52
"These flowers, brought me from my dear one's grave" 53
Vital Eclipse, I., II. 54
"The thought of thee, beloved" 56
"Last night was granted me" 57
"Full measure of most happy married love" . . 58
"O that some fine keen sense" 59
"This New Year's line" 60
Early morning of 23rd February, 1887 61
"Ten years have glided by" 62
"O Love that outlasts Life" 63
Fifteenth of December, 1887 64

OCCASIONAL SONNETS.

To Leigh Hunt, as conclusion, &c., I., II. . . . 65
To Leigh Hunt, on hearing, &c. 67
My Birthday 68
On W. J. Rolfe's "Friendly Edition" of Shakespeare, I., II. 69
"No barbarism hath power" 71
In memory of A. E. B. 72
To the Author of "Lorenzo of 'The Merchant of Venice'" 73
Queen Victoria: 26th February, 1886 74

VERSES.

PAGE

SEPARATION 75
MRS. H. H. FURNESS 79
THE BEREFT MOTHER 81
THE WILLOW TREE 83
MY ROSE-COLOURED SPECTACLES 86
A GARDEN IN GENOA 90
PROLOGUE 95
EPIGRAM 100
LINES ON A PHOTO-PORTRAIT OF DONATELLO GIGLIUCCI . 101
NERINA'S PRINCESSES 103
TENTH OF MAY, 1884 105
VALENTINE FOR PORTIA GIGLIUCCI 106

SONGS.

HER SECRET 107
HIS SECRET 108
WITH THEE 109
MADRIGAL 110
THE PEERLESS LADY 111
THE PERFECTED LADY 112

Carlsruhe.

I.

A fitting name is this, of "Charles's Rest":
Repose in stately palace of pure white,
Embosomed among trees of giant height,
Their verdant tops and sun-touched boles abreast
With thickets where the sweet birds lurk and nest;
And grassy glades that lead away from sight
To nooks and arbours pleached and closely dight,
Where quiet and a book are welcomest.
Here, while I roam alone and think of thee,
My own, I think how well this lovely place
Had pleased thy taste, as now it pleaseth me:
Though taking name from Carl of ducal race,
To me it bears the name that I love best,
And to myself I say:—"*My* Charles's Rest."

CARLSRUHE,
16*th September*, 1883.

II.

Here, in this peaceful spot, my spirit seems
To be at rest with thine: I see thee there,
Above these grand old trees, in upper air;
I feel thee in these golden slanting beams
Of sunlight, shedding balmy warmth in gleams
Upon my breast, as, with thy wonted care
To bring it happiness beyond compare,
They lull it now with soft delicious dreams.
With dreams that I have passed away with thee
To blest serenity that never ends,
Or dreams that thou art come again to me;
Each vision with the other vaguely blends:
I only know that rest with thee seems gained,
And blissful quietude of soul attained.

CARLSRUHE,
4th October, 1883.

III.

My "Charles's Rest"! again I see thee,—fair,
Sequestered, in a stateliness serene,
Refined yet simple; rarely have I seen
A spot so winning. Rural Enfield, where
Mine own beloved was born, sweet Dulwich, pair
Of English villages most dear have been
To me, enrobed by fields and hedges green:
And now, with even these thou may'st compare.
Thy lofty trees, thy bosky thickets close,
Wear now their rich autumnal-coloured gear,
Deep crimson, orange, paly gold, soft rose,
Harmonious blend; and while I see I hear
Still other harmonies,—the blithe bird's song
With Nature's universal voice among.

CARLSRUHE,
26th October, 1884.

IV.

Dear Enfield, birthplace of my king of men,
And neighboured near by royal Tibbald's Park,
Thou rankest high ; yet, with thy nested lark
And meadows where the small shrill-noted wren
Is heard, art modest ; Dulwich, gorgeous, when
Its College walls arose to make its mark
With Blenheim or with Hampton Court as ark
Of picture-gems ; yet, rustic until then.
In union of nobility with grace
Of quiet homely quaintness, these three vie :
Loved Enfield, Dulwich, and this pleasant place
Of German ducal elegance : 'tis why
I find it sympathetic to my taste,
And never feel inclined from it to haste.

CARLSRUHE,
26th October. 1883.

" The lesser pangs can beare, who hath endured the chief."
Spenser's " Faërie Queene," Book I. Canto VI.

One grief supreme makes smaller evils less :
It teacheth us with calmness to endure
Vexations that had else been well-nigh sure
To fret and sting us into bitterness :
Whereas we learn to curb and to suppress
Complaint, while growing strong in a mature
Perfected patience, needed for the cure
Of that one grief no words can e'er express.
Out of God's sharpest trials lessons flow
If we but docile be to read aright ;
From e'en the hardest and most bruising blow
A precept cometh to our moral sight :
Submissively our ills we'll strive to meet
While cheerfully all joy that's sent we'll greet.

CARLSRUHE,
4th October, 1883.

May't be, thy now perfected sight allows
Thee calmly to survey these sunsets strange,
These sunrises of broadly flushing range
Athwart the sky, that puzzle and arouse
Our earthly impotent surmise, which bows
In bafflement? Oh, can it be, thy change
To spirit-life enables thee t'arrange
Amid all well-known causes these grand Hows
And Wherefores that perplex our terrene sense
Until its "muddy vesture" is cast off?
The trust that now thou hast this gift immense
Doth help my heart submissively to doff
Regret; and think, on this thy day of birth,
More tranquilly of thee as gone from earth.

VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
15*th December*, 1883.

Keats and Charles Cowden-Clarke.

I.

"This soul of youth in age's mask."—*Endymion.*

Of Glaucus thus wrote Keats. Ah! had not he
By death been snatched away, he would have seen
How well his dear "friend Charles" fulfilled, when e'en
Fourscore, the poet-pupil's fantasy:
The "soul of youth" was there in energy
As when they two first read "The Faërie Queene"
And ranged together through its every scene
With ardent, fresh, young eager ecstasy.
At eighty, as at twenty, the pure "soul"
Was vigorous to receive all beauty, good,
And truth; enjoyed, as best of mental food,
God's grandly given universal whole:
Still youthful in his heart unto the last,
To youth and love immortal he hath passed.

VILLA NOVELLO,
2nd April, 1884.

II.

My hope beholds these friends and schoolmates twain,
Re-met for aye in realms where all they dreamed
On earth of poem-beauty is redeemed
And verified: there manifest doth reign
The loveliness that to their eyes was plain,
Though to the more prosaic sight it seemed
But mythical: the light that on them beamed
Far off, they now in full effulgence gain.
To Keats his fairest Cynthia's radiant face
Revealed in lunar truth; great Nature's breast
Laid bare; his visions of voluptuous grace
Perfected; aspirations set at rest:
Unto "friend Charles" his faith in love and right
Confirmed, and made for ever blissful bright.

2nd April, 1884.

Star Eyes.

I.

Some eyes from out our earthly path we miss,
  Whose every look at us was a caress,
  Full, full of love and love's true tenderness;
Stars that shed light and radiancy of bliss
Upon our own eyes with a constant kiss:
  That light withdrawn, we wander through the press
  Of life, left darkling, in a blind distress,
As one who skirts, at dusk, a dread abyss.
  To see these stars of our existence here
Amid the stars celestial that await
  Us in the hoped eternal Heavensphere
We patiently abide, however late,
  Fulfilment of our bounteous Father's fiat,
  And onward creep, with steps and heart held quiet.

VILLA NOVELLO,
  7th May, 1884.

II.

Glad Mother's eyes, that watch us draw our bland
First food from her own bosom soft and white,
And meet our upturned gaze with fond delight;
Proud Father's eyes, that greet us as we stand
Upon the moral heights he for us planned,
Achieving honours by a course upright,
And letting, while we win by steady might,
Success and duty still go hand in hand.
Dear lover-husband's eyes, aye seeking ours,
Repeating ever, ever pleased to tell,
The truth we both already know so well,—
That mutual love fills life with happy hours.
O starlike eyes, gone from my mortal ken,
When shall I see ye shine again, ah, when?

7th May, 1884.

Ay, just as ever do I love thee, dear!
As passionately, warmly, now I'm old
And thou art dead, as when our love we told
With young and living lips to either's ear
In whispers tender and so closely near,
One pillow served us both; not e'en the cold
Stern dart of Death, nor weight of graveyard mould
Can sever love that casteth out all fear
Of change or dissolution: once welded fast
In true affection, soul to soul conjoined
And homogeneous made, the two will last
Integrally together, golden-coined,
Divinely minted for eternity,—
A single-dual immortality.

24th May 1884.

In dream last night my husband's arms again
Enfolded me: again I felt the warm
Close pressure, felt again the wonted charm
Of tenderest assurance in the strain
Impulsive, ardent, when the clasps remain
With lingering hold, as though, to shield from pain
And guard from e'en the shadow of alarm
His wife, the loving clasper were full fain.
Oh pressure close, Oh lingering embrace,
That ever seemed so loth to cease, why must
Ye vanish with my dream? Wherefore give place
To images of perishable dust?
But no! The *spirit* of my dream is real;
And that shall be my comforting ideal.

25th May, 1884.

Full seven years have passed since thee I lost!
A sad apprenticeship in learning th' Art
T'endure bereavement, learning how apart
To live from thee who wast to me the most
Beloved of men, to know the pangs't has cost
This aching, longing, ever-yearning heart
To bear the wrenching from its counterpart,
Existing as a fragment, torn and tost
By ceaseless wish for blest reunion.
Yet many comforts have been granted me,—
Relations', friends' attached devotion;
'Bove all, the elevating thoughts of thee,
Thy worth, thy constant tenderness for one
Who was and is thy half, though now left lone.

12th June, 1884.

Here on this Terrace, where we two so oft
Paced up and down together talking, now
I pace alone deep thinking, thinking how
Time fleets, and how thy spirit dwells aloft
And watches me and with me for the soft
On-coming of the hour when I, as thou,
Shall pass from earth, and like thee gently bow
My head to God's decree, when life is doff'd
And Heaven is gained. Ay, Heaven with Him and thee
His gift, His best, His dearest, choicest gift
Of all His many priceless gifts to me:
For past delights, for present hopes I lift
To Him, in soul-outpouring plenitude,
My fervent, constant, trusting gratitude.

VILLA NOVELLO,
13*th June*, 1884.

A blissful dream of my Belovèd one
Vouchsafed to me first thing this morn! Methought,
Through many devious road-ways I had wrought,
Perplex'd and wand'ring, troubled and alone;
Until I came to where a wall of stone
Gave entrance to a garden: soft I sought
The house,—a room; and then a sound I caught,—
His voice,— I saw him! And to his arms I'd flown.
"Art thou not glad to see me, love?" I said.
"So long away!" he cried; "So long! so long!"
Like murmured burden of some mournful song,
The while our eyes upon each other's fed.
Hereafter may we say:— "So long!—Now, never!
Our God permits us nevermore to sever."

3rd July, 1884.

Marriage Anniversary.

I.

Another Fifth July, a Saturday,
As when we two were wed! On foot we went
Across the fields to Enfield; ling'ring leant
Upon the rail beside the brook where play
The minnows watch'd by Keats, who saw them stay
"Their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams," and lent
His ear to catch the "natural sermon" sent
To Poet's mind in all that round him lay.
His benison was with us, in the "joys"
He wished his friend might have through life; they then
Were in their freshest bloom, ne'er knew alloys
Of withering affection; no, not when
Life ceased: for still our love endures beyond
The grave, infrangible and firm and fond.

5th July, 1884.

II.

The very spot where erst the friends exchanged
"Good night" was shown to me, the very scene
Of parting, after reading "Faërie Queene,"—
The "grav'lly floor," the "grassy plain." Near ranged
A row of oaks, from slender saplings changed
To stout young oaks,— a father's hand had been
Their planter. In these hallowed meadows green
Were hosts of greenest memories, arranged
And set before me lovingly; made mine,
As all was made, from first to last of our
Blest married life, by sympathy divine
And gen'rous sharing; yea, from that sweet hour
Of honeymoon delight unto the last
Sad moment, when dear breath from lips had pass'd.

5th July, 1884.

III.

How well that Marriage-Day prefigured all
That followed! O'er our heads the clear blue sky,
Scarce flecked by lightest cloudlets,—true July!
Beneath our feet, green turf and wild-flowers small;
Beside us, hedge-rows, oaks, and beeches tall;
Between us, happy looks of eye to eye;
Words that said much, though spoken sparingly,
Of gladness we could now each other call
Our own for ever. Saturday of yore!
Then nineteen years of age, now seventy-five,
I can look back to thee as bringing store
Of life-long perfect wedded love, and strive
To wait with patience for the time I pray
May prove one endless blissful Marriage-Day.

5th July, 1884.

IV.

My Love on earth, my Love in Heaven! The ring
Then placed upon the finger of thy bride,
The ring she wore with such a girlish pride,
The ring that witness'd so much strengthening
Of faith and truth, making our hearts to sing
With happiness while we were side by side,
The ring so often kissed before and since thou died,—
That ring, methinks, hath power of lessening
The distance now between us, forms a link,
A golden link, that binds unbreakably.
It comforts me, companions me; I think
Of it and cherish it unspeakably.
Oh, wedding-ring of six-and-fifty years!
I see thee glisten through my tender tears.

5th July, 1884.

Methinks thy spirit sees me deck with leaves
And garlands thy dear portraits in our room;
Methinks thou watchest me with smiles that loom
Athwart the shadowed silence which receives
Me there, while still imagination weaves
Thy living eyes and looks to banish gloom
And bid my soul fresh trust and faith assume
When sense of loss assails it and aggrieves.
Returning home from Summer Northern air,
I re-adorn thine image, and it seems
To welcome me again with gladness where
We two so oft have revelled in the beams
Of Southern warmth and warmth of our own hearts,
That even now reflected glow imparts.

VILLA NOVELLO,
6th November, 1884.

Dost hear me whisper still, as erst, "Good Night,"
Before I sleep? Dost hear me, waking, say—
But with less sprightly tone than then—"Good Day"?
Dost hear me greet the early dawning light
With salutations soft to thee, thou bright
Glad star of mine existence, whose clear ray
E'en now doth shine and help me on my way
To that blest hoped-for meeting in God's sight?
The mere idea thou dost, is comfort good;
The fancy only, strength and courage brings:
I cherish the belief, and trusting brood
On it as truth, while in my bosom sings
The thought of all thyself hast often said
Of calling cheerfulness and faith to aid.

7th November, 1884.

In cherishing thy memory, mine own,
I worship Him who gave thyself to me ;
In thinking of the good compounding thee,
I think of Him who hath divinely sown
That good which flourished lovely and full-blown
For my reiterate felicity
While thou wert here, and now consolingly
I ponder on as to perfection grown.
Raising to thee devoted meditation
I feel I raise to Him devout respect,
Profoundly grateful, fervent contemplation ;
That when on thee I most with love reflect,
I then am most immersed in pious awe
And feel as though I then Him clearest saw.

9th December, 1884.

When I repeat thy " Hymn to God " first thing
I wake, last thing before I go to sleep,
I feel thou biddest me take heart, not weep,
But pray with thee and trust that time will bring
Us both our chief desire,—a strengthening
In faith and love and adoration deep
For our benign Creator, who doth keep
Us still in spirit intermingling.
Thy simple yet most earnest hymn of praise
And thankfulness exalts and stimulates
My soul with constant eagerness to raise
To Him our joint appeal : it elevates
Me with the thought that thus we still unite
In prayer and joyful, grateful, loving rite.

10*th December*, 1884.

I basked in sunshine of approval while
Thine eyes were living light : they now appear
Unto my hope as stars, though far, brought near
By an adoring faith, to bless with smile
Encouraging, and gently reconcile
My soul to patiently its burdens bear,
Submissively its earthly trammels wear,
And cheerfully still linger here awhile,
Until upraised by Will Divine to be
Made one again with thine, as here below ;
But then from fear of parting rendered free.
Within my heart this ardent hope doth glow
In fuller force while greeting thee this day,
Thy Birthday, in our whilom wonted way.

15th December, 1884.

I thus again begin the New-born year
  By giving my first waking thoughts to thee,
  By hailing thee with fervent ecstasy
And penning my first line to thee, my dear!
I try to imitate thy writing clear,
  I summon up thy bright alacrity,
  Thy promptitude and active energy
To fill our lives with joy and mutual cheer.
  Initiated we each twelvemonth that recurred
Throughout the course of our blest married life
  By interchange of written loving word:
Then let me still, thy still-adoring wife,
  Observe the old delightful usage now,
  Though only I can write, alas, not thou!

1st January, 1885.

The thought of thee is husband to me now;
For years were we "the married lovers" named,
And proud to be thus conjugally famed:
But, ah, since then, away from life art thou!
Yet none the less I feel God doth allow
Our married union to subsist unmaimed
In spiritual truth, that may be claimed
Inviolate by its plighted firm-held vow.
Thus thinking earnestly and constantly
And warmly of thee, love, I seem to bring
Thee palpably unto my soul to be
Its married half, in strengthening,
Sustaining, helping it to be its best
And worthy to enjoy with thee God's rest.

22nd January, 1885.

On Imagination.

I.

Were't not that "strong imagination" is
Vouchsafed to help us in our blank of loss,
How should we bear the yearning pangs that toss
Our souls bereft? How bear the thoughts of bliss
Departed? How endure to long for kiss
That nevermore can come? The tangled cross
Of vain repinings—blurred beside with moss
And mould of lapsing years—for what we miss,
Would 'reave us of our wits, were't not that aid
Is sent in shape of rare imagination,
Which gives us trusting hopes and visions made
For our encouragement and consolation:
Hopes of a future never-ending joy,
And visions of a peace without alloy.

23rd January, 1885.

II.

Imagination lets me see thee still
Beside me, lets me hear thy voice in tones
Of wonted loving-kindness, lets me once
Again enjoy thy cheering presence, fill
My senses with thy flowing laughter-rill,
That soothes and with its music glad condones
Regret, out-caroling those useless moans
That break from me in spite of better will.
Well was it said of "strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy
It comprehends some bringer of that joy";
It fashions for the sad bright compensation,
And out of veriest shadows brings forth light,
Affording to the inner vision sight.

24th January, 1885.

III.

Imagination sees thee in the stars;
In Sirius's sparkles red and green,
In Venus' softly-beaming silver sheen,
In scarlet scintillations of bright Mars,
In golden glorious track,—great Phœbus' car's:
No less in each familiar homely scene,
That long by both of us enjoyed hath been,
Of our own quiet, happy, household Lars.
As in the majesty of starry sky,
So in simplicities of daily life,
In highest and in sympathies close by,
Imagination gives thee to thy wife;
Gives thee in every thing that's good and sweet,
Gives thee in all wherein our souls may meet.

25th January, 1885.

IV.

By pouring out my heart to thee in these
Poor lines, I strive e'en faintly to express
The love that flows within me to excess ;
They help me to assuage and partly ease
My thirst to have thee with me, and to please
My thought that thou dost hear me still address
To thee fond words of wifely tenderness,
Which knows nor diminution nor surcease.
Thanks be to God for giving this resource
Against my stinging sense of widowhood ;
For granting my verse-utterance free course,
And letting it become to me true good :
Thus may these "tricks of strong imagination"
Subserve to misery's alleviation.

26th January, 1885.

A happiness through life, a happiness
E'en after death, thou wast and art to me:
In life, substantial pure felicity
That I could take into mine arms and press
Unto " my heart of heart " and feel it bless
Both thine and mine existence verily.
Now, the mere thought of thy supremacy
In goodness and in love brings joyfulness.
A soul like thine unending bliss bestows:
Communion with it, while on earth, doth shed
Delight on those within its sphere; when sped
To Heav'n, its cherish'd mem'ry star-like glows:
My Parents, all who knew thee, loved thee well;
And I, how passing well, no words can tell.

3rd April, 1885.

Sweet food for thought hast thou bequeathed to me;
Not one or sour or bitter grain t'allay
The full content with which I fondly may
Recall thy looks, thy words, thy tones of free
Outpouring love that flowed forth constantly.
I thank our God from hour to hour by day
And nightly ere I sleep, when Him I pray
To reunite in Heaven thy wife to thee
With no less happiness than here on earth
He granted to us both: for more I can
Scarce hope or wish in that regenerate birth
Of our true wedded bond that we began
In life terrene; save that in realms above
We humbly trust with ours will blend His love.

29th April, 1885.

A tender melancholy cometh o'er
My soul when here I pace, deep-thoughted ever,
Where thou and I so oft have been together.
Alone I wander now; and more and more
I miss thy dear companionship: of yore,
It kept me still in happiness, whatever
Might chance to be our theme of talk, and never
Depression came but took its flight before
Thy cheerful, hopeful, elevating tone
Of mind; encouragement and influence
Beneficent were thine; and now thou'rt gone,
They seem to reach me still through inner sense,
And gentle comfort soothingly impart,
While bidding me be patient and take heart.

On the Terrace at VILLA NOVELLO,
27th May, 1885.

Ah, when again I reach my native shore
And see its grand white cliffs, green-crested, bold,
Touched by the summer sunset's radiant gold,
If, with this sight of glory, I once more
Might hope that face so fondly loved of yore—
So still beloved—yet living to behold,
What flood of happiness, supreme, untold,
Would fill my heart unto its inmost core.
Dear face! instinct with tender thought for me,
I'll make the very thought of thee a fact;
A vision strong and vital shalt thou be
To welcome me to England and enact
Again thy customary kindly part
Of lighting up with joy thy Molly's heart.

BRUSSELS,
15th June, 1885.

I keep our Wedding-Day with thoughts of thee,
Mine own in Heaven! with thoughts of thee this morn
Before I join our friends whose hearts adorn
Their hospitable house, so kind, so free,
So ever glad to grace and welcome me
For thy dear sake, in their remembrance borne
With faithful loyalty, allegiance sworn
As to dead king, but cherished tenderly
For good that he hath living done, and left
To benefit survivors. Thou and I
Are still but one, although I am bereft
Of thee on earth; thy spirit cannot die,
Nor be dissevered from thy Molly's soul,
Made one with thine a firm integral whole.

WESTWOOD HOUSE, SYDENHAM,
5th July, 1885.

This, our Betrothal-Day of fifty-nine
Long years ago, shall not be left to glide
Away without a record, or abide
Unchronicled by fond memorial line:
That day itself beheld the plighted sign
Of love that until then had dwelt inside
Our hearts, but then with open happy pride
Was let unveilèd on each other shine.
The love that day confessed to either's soul
Doth yet in firm-knit truth and faith subsist:
It hath, through life, through death, through joy and dole;
And will, throughout eternity, exist:
I feel this more and more as years pass by,
And trust my feeling humbly, hopefully.

1st November, 1885.

Revealment.

I.

Oh, for some revelation of the fact
That my Belovèd liveth in the skies!
The fact but dwells in my breast-felt surmise;
But, oh, that it could have the smallest act
Of palpable fulfilment to compact
And to confirm the object of my sighs!
As 'tis, I hope, I trust, with blinded eyes
Of aspiration, yearning, aching, racked
In search of veritable evidence
To prove my wish a truth. Yet even thus
I try to rest contented with suspense:
The very aspiration linketh us
In firm reliance on God's mercy good,
And gives my craving heart consoling food.

3rd November, 1885.

II.

Such revelation as a whispered sound
Of thy loved voice, assuring me of peace
Attained, of peace that nevermore shall cease,
Of peace hereafter to be shared in round
Perpetual of love united, found
With thine own chosen wife, would give new lease
Of hope to my dejected heart, increase
My trust, and make devoutest faith abound.
But why repine because God's wisdom wills
Not such disclosure of the truths beyond
This life? Suffice it that my dread not kills
My faith, taught gathered strength from patience fond,
Believing stedfastly in future granted joy
By reason of past granted bliss naught can destroy.

4th November, 1885.

In dream't has been permitted thee to say
Once more to me:—"I love you! Ay, you know
I love you!" Words so often said and so
Intently proved whilst thou on earth did stay
To bless my life and make it day by day
A happiness unspeakable; and though
Thou'rt gone from hence, hast still the power to throw
A gleam of joy upon my lonely way.
Thanks be to God who granted me this dream!
Who granted *us* this dream; for it must be
That to thy spirit, as to mine, some beam
Of vision-sense vouchsafèd was, to see
Me as I lay, and utter to mine ear
Those tender words I've longed again to hear.

12th November, 1885.

'Tis not so much I mourn for thee, as long
For thee, since now have glided by eight years
Of waiting absence. First, came heavy tears,
Tears irrepressible, and anguish strong;
But as the years crept on, it seemed a wrong
To thy bright nature, not to strive 'gainst fears
Of separation, while the time more nears
For hoped reunion our lost loved among.
The thought of all thy cheerfulness, and hope,
And manly worth, God sends to take the place
Of vain regrets, and bids me give free scope
To trust I may in Heaven behold thy face.
On this, thy Birthday, thou shalt have no tear;
But only loving salutation, dear!

15*th December*, 1885.

No longer mourning because joys are past,
I try to satisfy my craving heart
By joying in the thought they were a part
Of my diurnal life, held dear, held fast,
To form its sustenance and firmly last
Beyond their hour, to comfort and impart
The strength of conscious having had, when dart
Of death has reft away their source and cast
Its sharp denial over future store:
For, certain, it can not annul, destroy
What hath been truly given of love, of joy,
Though stern forbidding, with its "Never more!"
Not Death itself can kill Love truly given;
That lasteth till it lives for aye in Heaven.

6th December, 1885.

To me a fresh New Year begins again :
To thee all years are now one glorious whole,
A flow perpetual, eternal, sole ;
And yet, to greet thee, darling, I am fain,
As I was wont, when thou with me felt pain
At parting with an Old Year, joy when goal
Of New was raught. O partner of my soul !
Methinks thy spirit, in responsive strain,
Greets mine, and joins it in the thanks it yields
To our beneficent Creator, who
Bestowed such deathless love between us two,
Who with His gracious kindness still enshields
Us both, communing thus—although apart—
And keeping troth together, heart to heart.

1st January, 1886.

This day, nine years ago, was the last time
That thou and I went forth together, free
To breathe God's open air, to hear and see
The glories of His earth, the space sublime
Of stretching coast and mountains, free to climb
In thought their height, or wander by the sea :
Our terrace-walk beneath the laurel-tree
Linked us in quiet joy, as now my rhyme
Unites us in my memory of that
Last walk together. Ah, how little—when
We lingered ere returning in, and sat
Awhile to gaze with meditative ken
Upon the broad expanse of blue above—
We dreamed thou wouldst so soon dwell there, my love !

19th February, 1886.

On re-seeing my Charles's Shakespeare-Ring.

How strange to see that ring on other hand
Than thine! So many years I saw it worn
By thee; so often have been with it borne
Caressing clasps and touches earnest, bland,
Of fond approval. Since,—bequeathed to stand
As a memento of a friendship torn
By death, but firm and fresh as in its morn,—
It hath been treasured in a distant land.
Now, once again it meets mine eyes and dwells
Upon the finger of our friend. Content
I see it there; and yet my heart upswells
At thought of what to me 'tis eloquent:
The dear lost hand—first wearer of the ring—
Mine closely, lovingly imprisoning.

8th March, 1886.

These flowers, brought me from my dear one's grave
By kindest sister's hand, are doubly sweet:
They come a fragrant gift from him to greet
Me with assurance of the love we have
Preserved e'en maugre death, an aid to save
Me from despondence; and a token meet
Of sisterly affection, true, complete
In thoughtful care, unwearied, constant, brave.
Small, simple blossoms! fraught ye are with worth
To me! your dainty chalices are filled
With perfume fresh from gentle Mother Earth,
Within whose bosom our good God hath willed
The mortal portion of my love should lie
When soared his spirit to eternity.

11th March, 1886.

Vital eclipse.

I.

The shade of thy withdrawal from my side
Fell on my life nine years ago this day.
The afternoon was bright, a softened ray
Of sunshine filled the room, seeming to glide
Athwart the bed, and tenderly abide
Upon thy pallid face, that tranquil lay,
Fast changing to the hue of deathly grey.
The shade came near, in dark and whelming tide.
One parting smile to last me all my life.
Closed were thine eyes, when, in thy dying ear,
I sobbed :—"God bless you, love! I'm here, I'm here!"
Last sounds thou heard'st on earth, were those thy wife
Thus breathed; last sign thou gav'st her was a smile.
God's blessèd mercies all things reconcile.

13*th March*, 1886.

II.

For though in shadow I have crept since then,
My twilight life has had its evening star;
Kind sisters, brother, friends, most loving are,
And help me through the dusk to clearer ken
Of bounties still bestowed, while waiting when
The dawn of hoped re-meeting, seen afar,
Shall shine, and, with meek trust that naught should mar,
I close my life with gratefullest Amen.
For Love through life, for hope of Love supreme
In after-life, O gracious God, accept
My fervent thanks! It is and has been theme
Of my devoutest gratitude, and kept
My soul in stedfast and unswerving faith
When weakened by the bruise of sorrow's scath.

13th March, 1886.

The thought of thee, Beloved, is comfort good;
When crosses vex me or when failures thwart
Endeavour, e'en when cares and sorrows swart
Depress me into depths of darker mood,
The thought of thee, thy love, thy smile, hath wooed
Me into dwelling on the brighter part
Of God's decrees, and fed my drooping heart
With better, hopefuller, more grateful food.
I bless our bounteous God, who still through thee
Continueth to shower His choicest gifts,
His all-sufficing tenderness on me,
His tenderness that most the soul uplifts:
Thus, when distress hath me in saddening hold,
I think on thee, my Charles, and am consoled.

15th March, 1886.

Last night was granted me a welcome dream
Of my Beloved. Methought a surging press
Was thronging up a staircase, with its stress
Impeding my descent, as passed the stream
Of folk still on. All suddenly a gleam
Athwart them smote of softened sunniness,
And then I heard a sound that I could guess
At once. The eager words, "Where is she?" seem
To thrill upon mine ear and heart. I cried
Aloud, "I know his voice!" and flung me prone
Upon my husband's breast, his arms thrown wide
To clasp me. Gone was the crowd; we were alone,
Alone with our recovered long-lost bliss,
Alone to interchange the ached-for kiss.

DRESDEN,
24th August, 1886.

Full measure of most happy married love
Was granted us on earth. Why, then, repine,
Or doubt 'twill be renewed when comes the fine
Perfectioning of God's decrees above?
From trust of this henceforth I'll not remove.
Trust in His mercy and His power divine
Shall be my staff and stay against supine
Regrets, misgivings, from the which I strove,
Too oft in vain, to free my sorrowing heart.
To me—to *us*— our Heavenly Father's grace
Hath been abounding. Shall it not impart
Confiding hope of meeting face to face,
And heart to heart, and soul to soul, for ever?
It shall: and from that hope I'll no more sever.

Villa Novello, Genoa,
22nd October, 1886.

O that some fine keen sense unknown to earth
Of my caresses given to all thy touch
Hath sanctified may reach thee, dearest, such
As I could wish, on this thy day of birth,
To thrill thy spirit with a tender mirth
Akin to that was thine in life! How much
And with what passionate impulsive clutch
I press to heart and lips things made of worth
By fond association with thy love,
I think must surely reach thee where thou art
In that divine all-knowing state above,
Permitting thee to read thy Molly's heart
As thou couldst only humanly when here,
Though even then thou knew'st thou wert most dear.

This New Year's line doth greet thee, as, of old,
I used to write ; inaugurating thus
Each entrance to another term for us
To love and live our happy round of gold,
Glad, joined existence, granted us to mould
Into one constant and continuous
Succession of joys multitudinous
That circled us together in its fold.
On earth 'twas so : then I may cherish hope
More perfect still is now our power to be
United ; since the soul hath higher scope
Than body in its aspirations free
And full and high and faithful, clinging fast
To that it loves and will love to the last.

1st January, 1887.

Early Morning of 23rd February, 1887.

A shock,—a tremble of the bed I lay
Upon,—a thought how soon I might be swept
To instantaneous death ; and then there crept
A solemn calm, in feeling now I may
Be called to sight once more of those I pray
Reunion with, whose dear remains have slept
In graves so long and sorely been bewept;
But whose immortal souls in blest peace stay
Where I may hope to meet and dwell with them,
Adoring God, and knowing Him. Methought
This sole idea had power to still and stem
The earthquake's agitating fear: it ought:
Belief I might again behold my best
Beloved in Heaven, set beating heart at rest.

Villa Novello, Genoa,
26*th February*, 1887.

Ten years have glided by since thou away
Hast passed from earthly life and from my side :
Bereft of thee, how hath my lone heart cried
For thy dear self and for thy tender sway.
But, as I stood beside thy grave to-day,
Mine eye not long did on the earth abide ;
It sought thee in the empyrean wide,
And, almost jubilant, my soul 'gan pray
In trustfulness that thine and mine communed.
I seemed to see thy best of self above ;
My thoughts to harmony were softly tuned ;
I seemed to hear thee and to feel thy love :
Content that, though beneath the flower-grown sod
Thy body lies, thy spirit is with God.

3rd March, 1887.

O Love that outlasts Life, how strong thou art!
And yet,— ah, yet,— how insubstantial, faint,
How vague, how vaporous, how marred with taint
Of longing still unsatisfied, apart
Disrupted from that dearer half of heart
Wherewith it found its vital strength, acquaint,
Compacted, welded, as no words can paint!
Thus torn asunder from its counterpart,
It hath a wounded force,—but still, a force:
As that brave knight of old fought on his knee,
When struck to earth, and kept his valiant course,
Stout-hearted to the last, in chivalry;
So Love defieth Death, and holds its own,
To conquer and survive in soul alone.

Villa Novello, Genoa,
Before Breakfast, 10*th June*, 1887.

Fifteenth of December, 1887.

A century would now have been thine age,
My Charles, hadst thou but lived until this day.
It beams upon me with reflected ray
From thy fine nature, which once shed a sage
And vivifying brightness on Life's page,
When we together read its wondrous way
Of showing forth God's guidance in essay
To worthily exist and earn His wage.
Sweet-temper, cheerfulness, and wisest mirth
Were thine, my lover-husband, ever thine,
While thou wert here beside me on this earth
And made the happiness of wifehood mine.
A joyful greeting, then,—undimmed by tears—
Shall hail the sunshine of thy hundred years.

15*th December*, 1887.

To Leigh Hunt.

AS CONCLUSION TO A BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH I WAS REQUESTED TO WRITE OF HIM.

I.

Leigh Hunt,—who 'mid the idols of my youth
  Wert one among the chief, and at whose home
  I first saw him was destined to become
The chiefest of them all, in very truth
My life-long one, compàct of gentlest ruth
  Yet finest manliness,—it now hath come
  To pass that I am asked to picture some
Of thy attractions. Willing task, good sooth!
  Ah, would that I possessed thy potent art
Of painting merits by a happy touch,
  Depicting qualities of mind and heart
By graphic words that tersely tell so much!
  But such as 'tis, dear honoured Poet-Sage,
  Accept the homage of my now old age.

31*st October*, 1881.

II.

A Poet's power hadst thou to perceive
The brightest points in all created things,—
The music in the brooklet's murmurings,
The ripple on the sand the sea doth leave,
The silver on the threads the spiders weave,
The nested happiness of bird that sings,
The God-sent comfort that full often springs
From sorrow bravely borne by hearts that grieve.
Ay, Sage wert thou in thy poetic gift,
That taught thee how from commonest of earth
The golden grains of beauty's self to sift,
Discov'ring plenty where there seem'd but dearth.
Thy thoughts, thy words, thy mien, with grace replete,
Proclaim'd thee Poet "every inch," complete.

31*st October*, 1881.

To Leigh Hunt.

ON HEARING THAT HORSEMONGER-LANE GAOL IS CONVERTED INTO A PLAYGROUND FOR CHILDREN.

Dear freedom-loving Poet, who here wrote
'Mid prison-bars "Descent of Liberty"
And larger part of "Story Rimini,"
Beguiling saddest thoughts by taking note
Of wingèd fancies that unshackled float
Within a brain, a heart, a memory
Like thine, to bring consoling ministry
Akin to music from the wood-bird's throat,
Thy ever-hopeful spirit may rejoice!
The prison-bars are gone; the walls remain;
But only to enclose the merry voice
And active sports of childhood: now no chain
Save daisy-chain, or link of hand in hand,
While dance and play the happy little band.

15th May, 1884.

My Birthday.

Three quarters of a century have I
Permitted been to live upon this earth,
To learn to feel and know the priceless worth
Existence hath, its mingled smile and sigh,
Its ardours and its aspirations high,
The conscious growth of thought and mind from birth,
The rapture of indulging woe or mirth
With those we love, secure of sympathy.
At sunrise, five-and-seventy years ago,
My Parents had the joy of their first-born:
The boon they then received and gave, that morn,
Brought mutual happiness in bounteous flow.
With grateful heart I've read Life's history,
Although it still remains a mystery.

22nd June, 1884.

On W. J. Rolfe's "Friendly Edition" of Shakespeare.

I.

To make me Godmother unto so fair
A child as this is "honour that I dreamed
Not of"; an honour that I should have deemed
Too high, but that I know the father's care
To testify regard fraternal where
Good Shakespeare-work and Shakespeare-love hath seemed
To him to be: so thus on me hath beamed
This sponsor-glory that I proudly wear.
Apostle-spoons I give not: but I send
My hearty blessing to the thriving babe,
And pray prosperity may it attend
Through all the circle of its astrolabe.
May countless new editions issue forth
To prove appreciation of its worth!

6th November, 1884.

II.

And Dedication too! the deed of Friend!
Most "Friendly" from the very first to last
Hath been the course through which this book hath passed:
The friendly generosity to send
Successive copies here from end to end;
The friendly shape and size in which 'tis cast,
So light, no trouble 'tis to hold it fast
E'en idly lolling, resting, to perpend
The weighty truths contained in every page;
Most friendly as a gift and as a book;
A boon to youth as 'tis to my old age;
A friendly comrade near, from whom to look
For counsel, comfort, charm, and wisest aid:
In short, a friendly Shakespeare,—all is said.

Villa Novello,
7th November, 1884.

No barbarism hath power to quite destroy
The beauty of a tree: no pollarding,
No ruthless cutting, lopping, formalling,
Can utterly obliterate the joy
Its innate grace conveys; reduced to toy
Fantastic-shaped by clipping, yews will bring
Some loveliness despite of all, and fling
A welcome shade, afford to lovers coy
A screen, or arbour for a thoughtful sage.
Its leaves, its branches, still remain to oak,
Though trimmed and hewn by woodman's cruel stroke,
A stately, noble thing from youth to age;
And e'en in death, when felled to earth and prone,
It looks a godlike giant overthrown.

27th May, 1885.

In memory of A. E. B.

Alas for Amy! well-beloved of all
Who knew her goodness, gentleness, and sweet
Compliant nature, eyes and smile replete
With kindly beams for large and small
Bestowers of affection,—friends, so tall
They had to stoop to greet her; babes, whose feet
Came tottering to her, lifting lips to meet
Her kiss; fond Parents, Husband, who now fall
To weeping prayer, when thinking of her loss.
Her loss! Ay, she is gone! Is gone from earth,
And lost to them awhile; but there, across
The azure heights of Heaven, she hath fresh birth,
And waits them where pure kindred spirits dwell
In happiness beyond all power to tell.

13*th October*, 1885.

To the Author of "Lorenzo of 'The Merchant of Venice.'"

Frank is the name and frank the hand that gave
To me this book; right frank and genial it!
With frankest, truest, highest feeling writ.
I frankly, therefore, ceremony waive;
And, with a frankness that I trust will save
His thinking this my freedom is unfit,
I fancy it may happen just to hit
His humour, as the best way to behave.
Not only frank, but kindly thing to do,
To send this gift and dedication too
To one of whom he very little knew;
It was a thing that would occur to few.
He may be *Cross* to others, but to me
He's Frank and frank: I thank him cordially.

12*th January*, 1886.

Queen Victoria:

26TH FEBRUARY, 1886.*

A quarter of a century to mourn
Thy wedded love, true woman-hearted Queen!
And now, as loyal as thou long hast been
To grief, thou loyal art to joy's soft morn,
That dawns upon thy heart, and doth adorn
Thyself and those around thee; with its sheen
Illuming thousands where thou'rt welcome seen
In smiles, a wide-spread kindly sunshine born.
Ay, "Mors et Vita" is the fitting strain
To touch thy widowed heart and teach it peace,
Life after Death doth cause its sting to cease,
Restoring it to gladness once again:
Well pleased, thy love beholds renewed thy cheer;
In sympathy of soul he hovers near.

3rd March, 1886.

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* The date when her Majesty went to hear Gounod's sublime composition "Mors et Vita" performed at the Albert Hall.

Separation.

However long I might be doomed to wait
Ere I should meet thee here again on earth,
I feel that I could teach myself content,
And steadily look forward to that time
With quiet patience, leaving until then
My craving love unsatisfied: then why
May I not now so school my soul to stay
Submissively for God's appointed hour?
I hope, I pray, I firm believe will come
That meeting so desired, so hungered for:
Then surely, surely, I both might and ought
To bide with meekest cheerfulness and trust
The interval decreed. Still, while that vast
Unknown,—that veil unpierced by mortal eye,
That vista grey, unfathomable, dim,
That unexplored Hereafter, limitless,
Mysterious, inspiring awe because
Impossibly beyond our ken,—while this
Immutably looms there before me,—with
A confidence unratified, a faith
That hath no token of assurance save

Its own fond strength innate,—what wonder if
Poor human heart doth sometimes faint and fail?
Moreo'er, the thought of dreaded change, that some
E'en higher, but less dear familiar form
Than that I loved on earth, might then be thine,
Perplexes, pains, and sets a-tremble all
My tried-for courage: ah, I could not bear,
Methinks, to find thee other than thou wert
On earth,—the same frank face, the same clear voice,
The same enjoying laugh, the same kind eyes,
Whose every look at me was a caress,
The same expressive hand, with cordial grasp,
The same mouth eloquent, when rich in speech,
Or when, in silent thought, emotional,
Or most, when, though its lips were mute, their soft
Impassioned pressure spoke thy tenderness.
No form angelic, no imagined wings,
No seraph shapeliness, could be to me
What that most manly personality,—
That goodly, kindly, true identity,
My Charles, my other self, my wedded love,
My best and dearest gift from God Himself,—
Was here on earth for more than fifty years.
Yet, after all, what signifieth form?
What form soever pleaseth our good God

To clothe thy spirit in, 'tis that, thy soul,
Thine own intrinsic essence, that I yearn
To have, to meet, to reunite with mine ;
'Tis that which I should recognise beneath
Whatever aspect it may please the Will
Divine to have the blest in Heaven assume.
Let me be stedfast, then, and falter not !
I will bethink me well of all vouchsafed
To us so long : 'tis that shall give afresh
Reliance to my faith, revive my heart
When down it droops, renew my earnest trust,
Sustain my firm resolve to wait and wait
With patient cheerfulness fulfilment of
Our bounteous Father's crowning dispensation.
His manifold and gracious gifts to both
While we were here united in this life,—
His special blessing in our mutual love,
Its constancy, its happiness supreme,
Our dear and honoured parents, valued friends,
Prosperity in writing-work (the toil
We took delight in), privilege to have
Occasionally needed rest of brain
And body, peeps at rural scenes away
From haunt of men and stir and smoke of town,
A day, perchance a week, in quiet spot

Where cottage lodging came within our means,
And gave us silence and pure air to breathe
By night, with fresh green lanes and fields to range
By day,—these granted benefits on earth
Seem warranty of sequent bliss to come
In Heaven above, where all created good
Is sure perfected and immortal made.

28*th October*, 1883.

Lines

IN MEMORY OF MRS. HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

My sister in concordant deed! although
I never saw thee, grasped thy hand, or knew
Thee in the flesh, methinks I knew thee well
In spirit, knew thy worth and excellence!
And now that come to me across the sea,—
The ever-heaving, ever-moaning sea,—
Sad tidings of thy death, beside mine own
Regret stand mournful pictures of that home
Made desolate by loss of thee, thou good
And noble woman! Oh, may memory
Of thee and of thy virtues,—now a sting
The more in newly missing thee,—become
A softener, a tender blessed means
Of comfort to those mourners in that home
Bereft! May thought of thee creep soothingly
And sweetly to the heart of him who now
Most feels thy loss, while draweth near, more near,
God's own good time for re-uniting ye!

And may thy children, when remembering thee,
Still emulate thine excellence and reap
Best solacè thence! Thus after thou art gone
From earth, thy spiritual presence shall
Again illume the home now darkened o'er,
And shed its wonted light of peace and joy
On those it loved and loveth evermore.

16*th November*, 1883.

The bereft Mother.

My arms are empty of their joy:
Gone is my child, my Baby-boy!
Oh, misery, my empty arms!

Gone is his balmy honey breath:
All sucked away by greedy Death!
Oh, misery, my famished lips!

Gone are his cheeks of budding rose:
Now white and cold as winter snows!
Oh, misery, my kissless mouth!

Gone are his starry eyes, my light
By day, my hidden suns by night!
Oh, misery, my darkness now!

Gone are crowings, chirpings, coos:
I vainly listen, only lose!
Oh, misery, my starving ears!

Gone are his smiles, his winning ways,
That gladdened hour by hour my days!
Oh, misery, my aching heart!

And I, I'm doomed to still live on,
Although my Baby's lost and gone!
Oh, misery, my lonely life!

His father first, now he is ta'en:
My all of love is stabbed and slain!
Oh, misery, my murdered love!

19*th March*, 1886.

The Willow Tree.

Ah, how I loved my love and he loved me
Together here, beneath the willow tree!
I sit and think,—my thoughts are wild and free—
I sit and think beneath the willow tree.

His body lies beneath the deep, deep sea;
His form is here, beneath the willow tree:
His bones are bleaching 'neath the white, wide sea;
His looks are here, beneath the willow tree.

His eyes aflame, his eager lips, I see,—
His cheeks aflush, beneath the willow tree;—
His gaze of loving rapture fixed on me,—
I see them all beneath the willow tree.

I know he lies out there, stone dead, at sea;
And yet he's here, beneath the willow tree:
I think and think,—can such things be?
God help my wits, beneath the willow tree.

Pale, prone, beneath the cold, the foamy sea ;
Yet sitting here, beneath the willow tree !
Stark dead, beneath the cruel whelming sea ;
Yet here, beside me, 'neath the willow tree.

His body there, his spirit here,—may't be ?
Permitted back, beneath the willow tree ?
If so, 'tis surely, surely, well for me
To have my love beneath the willow tree.

He told me he would come back from the sea,
And sit with me beneath the willow tree ;
He said it, I believe it, and I see
He's come to me beneath the willow tree.

True love ! True love ! thou'st kept thy faith with me !
Thou art come back beneath the willow tree :
Not death itself hath power to hinder thee
From coming to me 'neath the willow tree.

I, gazing earnestly, can look at thee,
Behold thee here, beneath the willow tree :
My aching heart grows quiet when I see
Thy form beside me 'neath the willow tree.

For oh, it aches! not always can it be
Kept still,—not e'en beneath the willow tree!
Ofttimes it strays away far under sea,
And cannot stay beneath the willow tree.

But more and more, it learneth patiently
To wait and watch beneath the willow tree;
To weaker grow, and dimlier to see
The long-loved form beneath the willow tree.

Some day, my neighbours, making search for me,
May come, perchance, beneath this willow tree:
My heart at peace, my soul with his set free,
They'll find I rest beneath the willow tree.

7th December, 1887.

My Rose-coloured Spectacles.

It hath been very often said of me
That I have spectacles of rosy hue;
That, looking through them, I am apt to see
Most things in fairer light than colour true.
That I've these spectacles I'll not deny;
I reckon them among my best of treasures,
They help me wonderfully to descry
The source of many super-subtle pleasures:
But I deny they falsify the truth;
They magnify it, yes, and make it clear;
They bring me back the happy eyes of youth,
That see all beauty brighter and more dear.
They teach me to behold with due forbearance
Some surface-blemishes that oft obscure
Deep underlying merits, whose appearance
My spectacles detect with vision pure.
They bring to view with ever-fresh delight
Small microscopic objects, trivial deemed,
But rendered precious to my aided sight,
And thus become by me aright esteemed.

A midge's crest, a blade of waving grasses,
The plumage on the wing of butterfly
Are each made obvious by my rosy glasses
And brought home to my heart as well as eye.
'Tis no slight benefit to have and hold
An alchymistic instrument that turns
One's daily iron duty into gold,
And casts a silver shine on all one earns.
'Tis surely well to have a pair of orbs
That shed a ruddy tint on common things
And substitute admiring that absorbs
The mind for critical disgust that stings,
Disgust refusing to be gratified,—
Forbidding eyes to be receptacles
Of simple pleasures,—won't be satisfied:
No, no! Give me my rosy spectacles!
Distinctly they reveal the "soul of good"
Residing "in things evil" and assist
Me patiently to wait and raise the hood
That shrouds it like an overshadowing mist.
"Would men observingly distil it out":
So adds the wisest of all Poets, he
Who knew far better than the rest about
The value, in a true philosophy,
Of spectacles rose-coloured, that present

The universe unto our inner sight
With observation thus divinely sent
To view it in its fairest, truest light.
They cause me clearly to behold God's Will
Displayed in every law of His Creation ;
Instruct me to accept unwelcome ill,
Because it is His sacred ordination.
They give me trust devout in what is latent,
And fill me with a soft reliant faith
From what I see of marvels brightly patent,
That to the heart a glorious promise saith.
'Tis privilege a medium to possess,
Wherewith by slow but sure degrees we learn
Beneath the darkest anguish and distress,
A spark of consolation to discern.
The matchless worth of one we've loved and lost,—
Which stabs more deep at first the sense
Of our bereavement, keeps our souls betoss'd
With pangs of futile longing, keen, intense,—
Doth gradually become the means
Of comfort, even joy, when we perceive
Above aught else the excellence that screens
And softens all, forbidding us to grieve.
The very virtue that enhanced regret
Assumes the form of solace, as we look

With firmer, stronger sight; we cease to fret
While contemplating spirit that forsook
Us never, but for aye remains a star
Of consolation and of love to guide
Us to the last, still near, though seeming far,
And faithfully, as always, by our side.
Oh, rosy spectacles! accept my thanks
For all thou hast enabled me to see!
Well may it be, thy gracious power ranks
Beyond most gifts vouchsafed by Heaven to me:
And to that Heaven Itself, who gave the gift,
My gratitude ineffable I lift.

24*th November*, 1883.

A Garden in Genoa.

This lovely spot well suits for musing o'er
God's bounties, for adoring His decrees,
Fanned by the welcome early morning breeze,
Inhaling freshness, drinking in a store
Of od'rous healthful scents at ev'ry pore;
Enjoying silence, mine own thoughts, at ease,
While watching birds among the nearest trees,
That feed or breast with warmth their nestlings four;
Made fearless by my motionless and mute
Regard, they chirping flit from bough to bough,
To pluck off berry, bud, or pecked-at fruit
With sudden snatch of beak, unheeding how
I note their theft; some, reckless spring from roof
Into mid-air, and dart so close to me
They seem to do't for my express behoof,
That I may clearly and admiring see
The sunshine through their filmy outspread wing,
Then settle on some twig and blithely sing
The while I sit in leisure listening.

Sometimes I hearken to the fountain's splash,
And see the gold and silver fish with swift,
Abrupt, yet lithest motion, boldly dash
Just where the water falls with strongest drift,
Unhurt, unbruised, rejoicing in the brunt
Of elemental purity to them
Congenial, eager in the rival hunt
For crumbs my hand hath cast upon the hem
Of clust'ring weeds that skirt their lucent home.
Anon the dragon-fly, with wings of gauze
And body lapis-lazuli, doth roam
And skim athwart the surface; without cause
Apparent, stops; then on again sharp starts,
And pertinacious hovers round and round,
In circles still recurrent ceaseless darts.
Beside the fountain's moss-grown rocky bound
Stiff-standing phormium tenax grows, on which
Sit squat and panting small green frogs, at bask
Beneath the solar rays for hours; then hitch
Themselves along and up until their task
Of motion be achieved; at last they leap
Aroused, and dive into the yielding glass
Of fountain's depth with reptile glide and creep.
I turn to look beyond the daisied grass,
Where, lightly poised upon a full-blown rose,

A lyre-marked butterfly now opes now shuts
Its wings to feel the sun ; its dainty nose,
Thrust down at intervals, deep seeks and gluts
Itself with sweets drawn from the rose's heart ;
Then flutters off and leaves its nectar'd feast
In search of other banquets that impart
The rover's zest of novelty at least.
A big, bluff, burly, blue-black bee doth plunge
Itself into the ipomœa's cell,
With stedfast push and onward headlong lunge,
Till lost amid its luscious hydromel :
Above the broad-leafed ginger's stamens slim
The long-proboscis'd moth doth hovering dip
His never-tarrying touch with hurry trim,
And takes a hasty momentary sip.
Brisk lizards speed, or spread their lankness o'er
Rough walls and stony crevices, to bake
In heat and glare ; then suddenly they bore
Between, and flashing disappearance make.
Mine eyes refresh themselves with gazing up
Into the greenness of embowering shade :
The ilex, with its leaves and acorn-cup,
Recalling English oak in forest glade ;
The ragged eucalyptus, with its leaves
Of sickle shape and slender stalk, that, like

The aspen, perfect stillness ne'er achieves ;
The aloe, with its stout aggressive spike ;
The cedrus deodara, downward-branched ;
Bay-laurel, poet-crowning, poet-crowned ;
Dark firs by banksia roses over-blanched,
Festooned and drooping-garlanded around ;
Cream-blossomed, glossy-leafed magnolia ;
Ilanthus graceful, neighboured near beneath
By scarlet-flowered smart bignonia,
Entwined with honeysuckle's fragrant wreath ;
The stateliness of Wellingtonia tall ;
In lush luxuriance of bush and shrub,
Azaleas, roses, yuccas, screen the wall ;
Fine orange-trees without the need of tub
Of Northern climates, while their foliage green,
Their bridal blossoms white, and fruitage golden,
All at one time upon their boughs are seen ;
Abundant ferns, with infant fronds neat folden,
Amid maturer ones, that fan-like spread ;
Shy modest violets half-hidden lurk,
With lilies of the valley perfume shed,
And let more showy flowers forward perk ;
Pomegranate, scarlet-bloomed, with bristly sprays
Of vivid green betipped with bronzy shoots,
And calceolaria that bold displays

Its yellow flauntiness in gaudy suits ;
Vines, passion-flowers, trail and intermingle ;
Date-palms, bamboos, carnations, in profusion ;
Geraniums, oleanders, double, single,—
A lovely brilliant mass of sweet confusion,
Harmonious in its blent variety.
A stretch of turfy lawn slopes smooth and even ;
For background,—blue, Italian, calmest sea ;
Above,—the bluer sky, true face of Heaven.
Rich colour, shapely beauty, might of wing
And fin, the wondrous potency of gift
To each created smallest, greatest thing,
In ecstasy of gratitude the soul uplift,
Inspiring it with deep humility,
And yet, withal, exalted happiness ;
A sense supreme of God's benignity,
That thus His universe doth grace and bless.

On the Terrace at VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
23*rd June*, 1884.

Prologue.

SPOKEN PREVIOUSLY TO AN AMATEUR PERFORMANCE OF "AS YOU LIKE IT" AT WESTWOOD HOUSE, JULY 5, 1882; HAVING ACTED MRS. MALAPROP THERE THE YEAR BEFORE.

A PLEASANT task has been appointed me—
To speak a Prologue for this evening's Play.
A pleasant task, and yet no easy one;
For what is there to say that's new upon
A subject so well-worn and oft discussed
As acting! Still, I fain would do my best
To gratify the kindly wish expressed
That I should thus take part in the to-night's
Performance. Pondering on this, I thought
I'd ask our friend, good Mrs. Malaprop,
For her advice. She gave it me off-hand.
"Observe me, Mrs. Cowden," she began;
"I would by no means have you deal in dull
And tedious latitudes, or dwell at length
On tropics too obtuse; but strive to be
Conspicuous, and let your sentences

Be clearly understood as soon as they
Are muttered. Keep your voice at constant pitch,
And let your tone be laudable to all.
Be sure they reprehend your meaning truly,
And catch the sense of what you say by mere
Defect of your distinct matriculation.
Rèmember,—the great art of speaking is,
To well denunciate your words, and make
Your audiences depreciate at once
Your every phrase, that every point may 'tell.' "—
"Permit me, madam," I rejoined, "to say
Just this : 'twas not so much the manner as
The matter of my speech on which I hoped
To have your counsel ; for a lady so
Well versed in her 'oracular tongue' must needs
Have something neat and apposite to say
On all occasions ; therefore able to
Suggest a fitting prologue to a play."—
"Assuredly," was her reply, "it does
Behove an ineffectual woman like
Myself to know a little how to give
Expression to her thoughts ; and I maintain,
The arts of orrery and acclamation,
With flights and flourishes plethorical,
Judicially brought in, are things we ought

To cultivate : the flowers of speech are what
We want to deck and to suborn with due
Contractive grace our plain opinions, our
Mature inflections, and evictions clear.
Mark me, I speak erratically, when
I say,—magniloquence, dissuasive ease,
Become a gentlewoman, if she must
Address a large elect dissemblage. As
For matter, Mrs. Cowden, when are we
At loss for that ? We women know full well
The way to fashion something out of naught,
And find or make a subject where there's none :
For, as the poet says : ' If rightly we'd
Be great, we must be great in argument ;
And greatly to pick quarrel with a straw
When honour's burning at the stake.' I quote
The very playwright, by-the-by, who wrote
The piece that's to be given here to-night.
I've heard he's good, a pragmatist of some
Repute. Do you know what he's like ? They say
He writes with much vapidity ; his pen
Runs on with turbid flow and senile pace
That carry one away ; and in suspect
Of the pragmatic Art, they tell me he's
A progeny ; his paregoric is

Pronounced by commentators great and small.
The critics quite accost their forms of praise,
And come to the end of their satin, as
The saying is (the fag-end, I suppose);
They can't find epitaphs of elegy
Too high: one calls him 'Miriam-minded,'—why
I can't make out; and one entitles him
'The mortal Williams!' All agree in this,—
To rank him as the king of writing men,
And give him stolid literal renown.
It may be true; I'm told it is: but I
Don't go by hearsay. I intend to judge
Myself: so I shall take my seat to-night
Among the audience,—see the actors act,—
Pay strict pretension to the piece itself,—
And if I find this Shakespeare really is
Deserving, I will give him my support.
I want to be evinced by my own eyes;
And what I say is—give me jocular proof."—
Thus spake the sapient Mrs. Malaprop.
I follow her example, and resolve
To take my seat in front and hear and see
The play prepared for our delight—I hope
With your consent; for though I've failed to speak
The Promised Prologue, I have made attempt

To entertain you till our company
Of amateurs are ready to begin.
And now beseech you, ere I take my leave,
This little hint, on their behalf, receive:—
Your approbation is their best reward:
Applaud them, then; your gracious smiles accord:
On you, to-night, their happiness depends;
You won't withhold it, I feel sure, kind friends;
Exactly thus, in truth, the matter stands;
So, gentles all, I leave it in your hands.

Epigram.

THOUGHT OF AT THE DRESDEN HOF-THEATER.

A man may be great, though he's doomed to be small:
A palpable fact, I can prove it to all.
An excellent artist is clever Herr Klein;
For though his name's Little, his acting is fine:
It's varied, it's polished, and grand in each way,
When hypocrite,* tyrant,† or page‡ he doth play;
As self-made rich merchant,§ or middle-aged major,‖
He always appeareth the perfect "old stager."
Accept, then, Herr Klein, this assurance,— your name
Must ever be cherished as large in its fame.

DRESDEN, 20*th August*, 1886.

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* Präsident La Roquette. † Herzog von Alba. ‡ Perrin.
§ Stephy Girard. ‖ Graf Monthan.

Lines.

ON A PHOTO-PORTRAIT OF DONATELLO GIGLIUCCI.

Thou bonny baby, Donatello,
Thou darling chubby little fellow,
I'm told thou'rt rosier than a cherry,
And ever sparkling, ever merry.

I'm told thou hast large eyes of blue,
Expression varying, always new;
Complexion brilliant, golden hair,
Italian born, yet English fair.

No photo can these graces give;
But I by hearsay know they live:
This portrait helps my hearing well
To fancy thy bewitching spell.

So irresistible thy charms,
I'm told the Princess* in her arms
Desired to hold thee when she met
Thee with thy nurse, thou blooming pet.

---

* Victoria, Princess Royal of England and Crown-Princess Imperial of Germany.

Imperial Princess, true and good,
Felt how Imperial Babyhood
In fascination reigns supreme,
And makes Imperial purple deem

Itself most happy to enfold
Soft creamy limbs and curls of gold;
Forgetting rank in Woman's part,
While taking childhood to her heart.

Thy name suggests that thou wilt prove
Someday a genius fine; my dove,
If thou but prove a worthy fellow,
I will not care, dear Donatello.

I'll be content, so thou art brave,
High-principled, and so behave
Thy Parents may be proud of thee
And thy distinguished probity.

May thou, as man, fulfil thine ev'ry duty,
Be thou renowned as much for moral beauty,
As now thou'rt famed for all those infant charms
That made a Princess take thee in her arms.

22nd November, 1883.

Nerina's Princesses.

Nerina saw her suddenly appear,—
The Crown-Princess! — and stood aghast, dismayed,
In sheer bewilderment, not any fear;
Struck speechless on the spot, no word she said.
Her little mind was puzzled with the thought
Of Cinderella, who, as Princess, went
To dance at Prince's ball, yet who was nought
But simple girl with godmother that sent
Her there, attired in robes and jewels bright
Instead of rags with ashes dirtied o'er,
And charged her to be back before midnight
On pain of never being Princess more.
All this confusedly perplexed the child,
And made her strive to reconcile the two,—
The Princess smiling there, so gracious, mild,
The Princess whom she'd thought of hitherto,
So grand, so dazzling in the fairy story:
Compared with her the living Princess seemed

To be far less in splendour and in glory
Than that Princess of whom so long she'd dreamed.
Which was the truer? This was what detained
Nerina thinking, and deprived her tongue
Of power to answer when the Princess deigned
To ask her name and choose her from among
The other children at Baveno, when
Beside the Lake she took her quiet walk,
And stopped to watch the tiny maids and men
At play, and tried to draw them into talk.
Hereafter, looking back to that event,
Nerina will have learned to know the real,
Distinguishing what gentle kindness meant,
And how a live Princess excels ideal.

23rd November, 1883.

Tenth of May, 1884.

My dear grand-nephew, Donatello,
Bright, merry little year-old fellow,
  Your first of Birthdays thus I greet,
  And wish you all things good, my sweet!

Good temper,—that, I hear, you have;
Good health,—that, too, I need not crave;
  They tell me it is yours, dear boy,
  And that almost includes all joy.

Good fortune, won by earnest deed;
Good judgment, that you may succeed
  In spending well the wealth you've gained,
  With happy self-respect attained.

May you achieve a glorious fame,
Right worthy of your ancient name;
  And when you've reached to man's estate,
  May you be known as good and great.

Nay, even if you're good not great,
It is enough: at any rate,
  Howe'er with others you may stand,
  To me you always must be "*grand*."

God bless the darling Donatello!
Dear, bonny, little merry fellow!
  May he be ever gay as lark!
  Thus prayeth Mary Cowden-Clarke.

Valentine for Portia Giglucci.

Who is Portia? What is she?
That all her friends commend her:
Gentle, fair, and good is she;
The Heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind, as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
In her heart, I'm well aware—
Mine hath not partial blindness—
Kindest thoughts inhabit there.

I know her to be constant, true;
I know her fond affection's mine,
She would not change my old for new:
We are each other's Valentine.
Ay, like my Portia there are few!

14th February, 1884.

Her Secret.

I say it to myself so low,
My secret none can ever know;
I say it to no human ears,
'Tis Heaven alone that knows and hears
I love him, yes, I love him!

I think he does not care for me,
I think he does not care to see
I care for him: then, if 'tis so,
I only hope he'll never know
I love him, yes, I love him!

But if by blessed chance I found
He really loved me, only bound
To silence till that very day,—
Should I then courage find to say
I love thee, yes, I love thee!

2nd June, 1884.

His Secret.

I dare not tell her what I feel;
No, let me, let me still conceal
My thirst that she could only guess
The truth I may not yet confess,
I love her, yes, I love her!

Till rich enough to crown my life
By asking her to be my wife,
I've firmly vowed I'll silent be
And let her not too plainly see
I love her, yes, I love her!

Meanwhile I work amain to earn
The right to tell her how I yearn
To call her mine: Oh, blessed day
When, heart outpouring, I may say
I love thee, yes, I love thee!

2nd June, 1884.

With thee.

When all things fair still fairer seemed,
  When Nature brightly smiled to me,
And on my very soul hath beamed,—
  Ah, 'tis that I was then with thee,
    With thee, with thee!

When grander seemed earth, sea, and sky,
  With grateful rapture filling me,
And Heaven itself seemed closely nigh,—
  Ah, 'tis that I was then with thee,
    With thee, with thee!

While thou wert here 'twas ever thus:
  Now thought of thee consoleth me
For absence that divideth us;
  In spirit I am still with thee,
    With thee, with thee!

23rd November, 1884.

Madrigal.

Since Love hath flown into my heart,
What wonder that I feel his wings
Beat flutt'ring there, with throbbing smart
That burning sleepless fever brings?

The little rogue will nestle there,
Though often, often I am fain
To drive him thence, when in despair
At Sacharissa's cold disdain.

Yet when she smiles, in kinder vein,
The urchin claps his wings on high:
Up bounds my heart, and, free from pain,
I feel I would not have him fly.

But close, and ever closer press
The sweet tormentor in my breast;
Beseeching him, with soft caress,
To fold his wings and with me rest.

The Peerless Lady.

She's loveliest of ladies known to fame,—
A certain Lady whom I will not name,—
A paragon she is beyond compare,
This peerless lady, this sweet lady fair.

She's not more fair than she is excellent;
She's charitable and beneficent,
She's sensible and clever and she's kind;
Her charms are matched by nobleness of mind.

She's all that on imagination beams,
She doth fulfil a poet's highest dreams;
Her beauty's more than earthly, 'tis divine;
She hath but one defect,—she is not mine.

27th January, 1885.

The Perfected Lady.

The lady is perfected now,—she's mine!
I find her more than ever fair, divine;
The sole defect she ever had is gone;
She's faultless and my wife, she is mine own!

All that I thought her once, I now believe;
I've learned she's more than I had dared conceive:
More lovely, graceful, gracious, good, benign,
And is in truth what she appeared by sign.

To call this perfect creature mine for ever,
To know that nothing now can us two sever,
To feel that she is Heaven's gift to me,
Is bliss beyond whate'er I thought could be.

28th January, 1885.

POSSESSORS OF MRS. COWDEN CLARKE'S

"Concordance to Shakspere"

ARE REQUESTED TO PRESERVE THEREIN THIS PAPER.

THE mode of spelling "Shakspere" was used, when printing my Concordance to the great poet's plays, in deference to the wish of Mr. Charles Knight, its original publisher; otherwise I should have used the form [Shakespeare] which I have always adopted, because it was the one given in the First Folio Edition of his dramatic works by its superintenders and his brother-actors Heminge and Condell. The name is also given thus in the First Edition of his Sonnets; and it seems to have been the orthography used in print where his name was given during his lifetime. That as many as sixteen different modes of spelling the name have been found to have been used at the epoch when he wrote, and that he himself did not adhere to any particular one when signing his name, appears to be merely in accordance with a fashion of the time, which allowed of the utmost irregularity in the orthography of men's names.

The above affords an explanation of the reason why my "Concordance to Shakespeare" bears on its title-page a form of orthography varying from the one which is given in our "Shakespeare Key" (which forms the companion volume to the Concordance) and all the other works upon this subject written by my beloved husband and myself.

MARY COWDEN-CLARKE.

VILLA NOVELLO, GENOA,
January, 1881.

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One Lecture on Sonnet Writers.
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The Hawthorn Bough; or, the Philosophy of Cheerfulness (in "The People's Journal")... 1846
My Arm-chair; my Desk; my Pocket-book; my Home (in Hone's "Table-Book") 1827
Inn-yards (in ditto) 1827
Sonnet on receiving a Lock of Mrs. Somerville's Hair (in "The Manchester Examiner and Times") 1867
Unless; Making up my Mind; After all; And yet. Four Songs in imitation of Italian Stornelli (in "Temple Bar Magazine") 1872
Asking. A Song (in "Temple Bar Magazine") 1875
Be true to me, my Love. A Song (in "Temple Bar Magazine") 1875
The Declaration. Stanzas (in "Temple Bar Magazine") ... 1881
Written at Dawn, on the 23rd of April, 1869 (in "Robinson's Epitome of Literature") 1879
Miss Kelly at the Manchester Athenæum (in "The Manchester Examiner and Times") 1847
Music among the Poets and Poetical Writers (in "The Musical Times") 1856
Festival of the Salzburg Mozart Institution (in "The Musical Times") 1879
Music in Dresden (in ditto) 1879
Cherubini's Treatise on Counterpoint
Catel's Treatise on Harmony... ... } Translations 1854
Berlioz's Treatise on Instrumentation

Note.—Some of the above publications have appeared in American as well as English editions, others appeared in now extinct magazines, and others are at present out of print.

(LIST CONTINUED).

Honey from the Weed; a Verse Volume 1881
Leigh Hunt; a Descriptive Sketch (in "The Century Magazine") 1882
Puck's Pranks; a Juvenile Drama (in "The St. Nicholas Magazine")... 1883
On English Cookery in Shakespeare's time (in "The Merry England Magazine") 1883
Verse-Waifs 1883
A Score of Sonnets to One Object 1884
Amateur Performance of "Every Man in his Humour" (in "The Manchester Examiner and Times") 1847
Salvini's Othello (in "The Athenæum") 1864
Salvini's Corrado (in "The Athenæum") 1885
Ernesto Rossi's Hamlet (in "The Athenæum") 1873
Shakespeare's Self, as revealed in his writings (Shakespeariana) 1885
Uncle, Peep, and I; a Child's Novel 1886
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A Story Without a Name (in "The Girl's Own Paper") ... 1887
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